

FULCRUM

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Pollution & Capitalism



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LETTERS

The FULCRUM, Sir:

In your paper I frequently see articles by a Bill Pritchard. From my law studies I understand that during the 1919-1920 "Winnipeg Strike Trials" there was a W.A. Pritchard who made a notable account of himself by addressing the jury for two full days from ten in the morning until ten in the evening. Is your Bill Pritchard any relation?

Student -- Vancouver, B.C.

REPLY:

Not a relation but the same William A. Pritchard. He is over 80 and lives in Los Angeles. We are irreverent enough to call him Bill. Bill's Spartan effort fifty years ago was defending (perhaps establishing) the worker's right to be involved in trade union and political activity. Pritchard exhibited almost prophetic wisdom in his opening remarks.--"In my own mind I am convinced that the historian of the future will drive the knife of critical research deep into the bowels of the bogey that has been created by certain legal luminaries of this city."

Bill will be visiting Victoria this summer and it is to be hoped his schedule will permit him to visit many Socialist friends.

Bill still writes in a manner that belies his years and it is most appropriate that the fiftieth anniversary of the Winnipeg General Strike be marked with one of Bill's own poems.

Quotable Quote: "According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than that neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. Hence, if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure ... also exercise their influence on the course of the historical struggle, and in many cases preponderate in determining their form." (Engels in a letter to J. Bloch)

A voice rang clear from Outer-Space

"In the Beginning 'God'."

And as I sat and mused thereon,

To me, it seemed quite odd.

"In the Beginning of 'What?'" I asked

The response was most sublime:

"In the Beginning of 'What?'" you ask:

"In the Beginning of 'Time'."

Thus this imagined dialogue

Held a concept most sublime -

A view: that once existed:

"Time" when there was NO "Time."

Yet Christians here on mundane soil

Found comfort in that Voice;

Despite divisions - varied creeds,

It made their hearts rejoice.

But I, poor cynic, heard again -

The voice was clear, but HOLLOW.

It came through Space from out a Ship

Ironically named APOLLO.

W. A. P.

and gaily six million gallons to sea do daily flow

POLLUTION? PROFITS? SOLUTION?

Here in tranquil Victoria. Canada's retirement paradise. Where nearby lakes, mountains and seaside resorts welcome the summer tourists (accompanied by dollars please). Here is where it couldn't happen. Pollution? It couldn't, but it did. The rude signs by the picketeers—"You are swimming in your own shit". Suddenly the brown stuff in the water no longer looked like sea weed. The unofficial signs of the picketeer were followed by official ones of the Department of Health — "POLLUTED--THIS WATER IS UNFIT FOR SWIMMING"

THE MAYOR STEPS IN (up to his neck)

Of course the water had been polluted for a long time. The interpretation of how much rated from very little in the eyes of those who were in the embarrassing position of having to do something about it to "something must be done (cheaply)" by those whose revenue was related to it, to general apathy and a feeling of helplessness of most of the working class. Then there was that ever present group who want a pleasant environment in which they can live in harmony with their fellow man.— The protestkateers and picketeers. For a long time there was a lot of talk, but no action. The erection of the Pollution signs changed all this. Hotelmen, shop-keepers and other related philanthropists who feared the signs could cause a diminishing number of tourist's pockets in which they could keep their hands warm, suddenly became very concerned about the health and welfare of the community. Their first proposed measure of social welfare was to have the signs taken down. When this failed, they put pressure on the city businessman's chief administrator—the mayor. For someone who is in such an untenable(?) position, Victoria's mayor Hugh Stephen is really not a bad guy. After discussing various proposed solutions the mayor called a public meeting to deal with the matter.

Of course, the protestkateers were there with their proposed "solutions" and complaints. As could be expected, their proposals were put down as economically unrealistic. The "solution" that won the day was the economically realistic proposal to treat the effluent before dumping it into the ocean so that people can swim in debacterialized EXCREMENT.

THE REALISTIC SOLUTION

So far ignored is the solution put forth by a small group. You will not find any of this group amongst the protestkateers or the picketeers. Not because the group is in favor of pollution. To the contrary they are as conscious and disgusted by it as anyone. Nor will you find them siding with the Motelers or Restauranteers. Nor do they support the mayor's economical proposals.

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POLLUTION (continued)

Not because they want capitalism run uneconomically.

These people recognize that the mayor is pretty well stuck. He has little choice but to run capitalism as economically and as competitively as possible or lose the market to other areas and thus engender other problems. These other people referred to are the Socialists. They see pollution as but one problem in a sea of capitalism's problems. These Socialists therefore do not join in the futile appeal of capitalism without pollution no more than they join in similar appeals of capitalism without war or capitalism without poverty. Capitalism is tied to the market place. It is capitalism that causes these problems. It is capitalism's existence that prevents real solutions. This is the reason the Socialists cannot in all honesty join in the reformers cries for mercy. The Socialists message is to abolish capitalism with its price tag on production and replace it with a society whose sole motivation is the satisfying of human enjoyment--Socialism.

by C. Peter Furey, Socialist Party of Australia

CHARDIN: A JESUIT GRAVE DIGGER OF RELIGION

In his book, "Man's Place in Nature," Pierre Teilhard de Chardin confirms the evolutionary view of man's origin. Using a diagram, in relation to the universe, he traces man's ascent from the sub-electron (i.e. non-living matter) through virus forms, through the ape stage up to his present universal human shape and qualities -- Good heavens! What ever happened to the bible story of special creation?

Chardin is vastly impressed with the comparatively sudden flowering and dominance of the human race over its environment and all other living species. He writes of man having, (1) extraordinary powers of expansion and (2) extreme rapidity of differentiation. These he notes without asking, why, or how, it came about. However, this is no mystery to Socialists. Lewis Morgan in his work, "Ancient Society", substantially reveals how perhaps for millions of years, mankind widely, imperceptibly, and barely consciously has been regulating his own growth and development, among other ways, by marriage laws aimed at defeating incest and the defects arising from it: And this obviously long before Old Testament divine ruling on such questions. ■

Chardin asserts that life is a property of complexity. "Chance alone," Chap. 4) appears to him to have governed the emergence of life from pre-living matter. He accepts inert matter and motion can be transformed into biological matter and life. Where he appears to stumble in this evolution is, where or at what stage does direct mental life transform into reflective or abstract thinking as in man. He appears to boggle at accepting the view of mental as well as physical evolution even though he realises it is already an established fact.

■ Evolutionist Louis Leakey and his wife Mary, searching through the Olduvai Gorge, East Africa, have recently found evidence of man's existence extending back over 20,000,000 years.

CHARDIN (continued)

This unorthodox, even heretical, Jesuit, feels that with the spreading of thinking man all over the globe there has developed a noosphere (a thinking sphere), rather like the Van Allan Belt or the all pervading magnetic radiation. There are many events immediately apparent which could provide a basis for such illusions: e.g., universal appeal of Pop music, decimalisation of the various national monetary systems, the spreading acceptance of the metric system of weights and measures. Marx too, refers to the emergence of an International literature arising from the various national literatures (Communist Manifesto). Socialists hold all this to be due, in part, to the improving communications between nations, the spread of literacy and common prevailing needs mainly of our master class. If a noosphere to Chardin is acceptable, why not also a digestionsphere? or Sleepsphere? For digestion and sleeping are just as much properties of human biology as thinking--even more so.

In the main, Chardin's views to the extent here clearly set out are acceptable to the physics and biologic aspects of the socialist case: e.g. "If we define research as an effort to feel our way towards the continual discovery of better biological arrangements we may (and even MUST) agree that very generally speaking it represents one of the fundamental properties of living matter." (Chap. 5). Agreed! Also we insist that in the special field of class conscious research and activity, socialist theory operates on the same basis.

Chardin's highest aspiration, (in a few million years time), appears to be "socialization of thought" Socialists, however, aim at total socialization of the means of production and distribution as well as the abolition of the class system which rests upon private property ownership. Of the existence of classes with their resultant conflicting interests continually rending asunder modern society Chardin reveals no apparent awareness, nor anything of the joint evolution of these two opposing classes.

These theological off-beat views are limited in their usefulness to our cause, apart from revealing the crumbling edifice of religion. They are neither sufficiently widely based nor is their penetration adequate to create a serious challenge to the Marxian position and interpretation.

Chiefly, the novel feature of "Man's Place in Nature," is, perhaps, that Chardin's views may eventually be embraced by the R.C. Church as another segment of their infallible doctrine, as it has presumably already quietly done with Copernicus' astronomy and Gregor Mendel's research on genetics.

The reputation of Jesuits for their renowned subtle encyclopaedic insight, however real this may have been, in modern times their best efforts as per Chardin? fail miserably in comparison with the accumulated knowledge and universal outlook stored up over the last two centuries in the materialist view of the natural and social sciences, in abstract and mental research.

That capitalism digs its own grave is a piece of Marxism thoroughly familiar to all socialists. Not only is it capitalism that is so obliging but every form of pre-capitalist society also complied, or tended to comply with this law. The Catholic religion is a classic example of this, for in conclusion, Chardin brings in God only once throughout his entire book, i.e., during the last sentence: and here in view of the foregoing, quite irrelevantly.

Jim Milne

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Winnipeg

THE S. L. P.* TODAY

Members of the Socialist Party of Canada have little or no contact with the S.L.P., awareness of its existence coming mainly from travels in the US and Britain and from occasional pieces of S.L.P. literature. Members away from this association, and naturally interested in workers' movements, wonder at times if the S.L.P. is learning anything.

Not very much, judging from a pamphlet, "Why We Have Resigned from the Socialist Labour Party of Great Britain", issued by two former members, J & N Plant. All the old illusions are carefully preserved.

The S.L.P. conceives a Socialist society made up of "Socialist Commonwealths", all trading with each other "on the basis of the social labor time embodied in the goods exchanged." The economic laws of capitalism continue to apply but the worker who now receives the value of his labor-power in the form of wages will then receive vouchers equal to the value of his labor. The Marxian principle, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need," is not accepted by the S.L.P.

Strongly tinged with nationalism, the S.L.P. pictures its "Socialist Commonwealth" within existing capitalist boundaries. "It is forever talking about the workers taking over the industries of 'the nation' and creating a 'Socialist Britain' or a "rigid demarcation line along the present day political state boundary between the U.S.A. and Canada," and a map of "Socialist Britain" shows "England, Wales, Scotland and Northeren Ireland but is careful to obliterate the Republic of Ireland."

The "Socialist Industrial Union" has an important place for the S.L.P. both before and after the ending of capitalism. Its "might" is needed to back up the Socialist ballot (Political power is sufficient for the capitalists!) and it will dish out the labor-vouchers the workers are to receive and perform other chores under Socialism. The imaginary might of the Socialist Industrial Union becomes transformed into equally imaginary usefulness in future society.

The S.L.P. still regards religion as "a private matter - a matter of individual concern and personal preference. It, therefore, does not fight, and has never fought, religion." This is quoted from an official S.L.P. publication and shows one of the many gaps in S.L.P. knowledge of class society. Although claiming to be Marxian, it is often without knowledge of important features of Marxian thought and has evidently never heard Marx's dictum, "Religion is the opium of the people."

When the Bolsheviks rose to power in Russia a wave of rage shook the capitalist world, countered somewhat by a wave of sympathy from Socialists and from radicals of all shades. The capitalists settled down after a few years to an acceptance of Bolshevism. The Socialists soon got over their initial sympathies and labelled Bolshevik Russia within the capitalist scheme of things. The radicals straggled along behind, gathering unpalatable lessons on Bolshevism. Among the declining exceptions were the Communist parties and the S.L.P., the

*Socialist Labor Party

**"Why We Have Resigned from the Socialist Labour Party of Great Britain,"
J & N Plant, 108 Cambridge Gardens, London W10, England.

The S.L.P. Today (concluded)

latter standing staunch in support of Lenin, then Stalin, through all the twists and turns, swollen concentration camps and swelling slaughter, until the Hitler-Stalin pact and the invasion of Finland. This was too much for the S.L.P. which has opposed the Russian dictatorship since then.

Looking back, the S.L.P. has gained a little knowledge in a long time. Looking ahead, we would hope for a much greater knowledge in a much shorter time.

W. Z. Miller

Los Angeles

BACKGROUND OF THE "RACE" CONCEPT

To obtain a proper understanding of the "race" problem it is essential that one studies seriously socio-material conditions. How was this problem created? How was the "race" concept developed?

One can then discover that the interests of the capitalist class required the adoption and promulgation of "racism"; that those interests might thereby be protected and enlarged. This is to be seen in the early days of capitalist development.

People of different skin color are placed in separate "racial" categories but this "scientific" enormity was not perpetrated without the willing help of the pseudo-scientists (apologists for capitalism) who developed this "myth" into "scientific" conclusions.

To brand people of different skin colors as "races" is to erect barriers against normal communication - and thus, as it were, place them on the outside of "all mankind."

In the latter part of the 17th, and the early part of the 18th centuries, the darkest pages in the history of Africa were written.

The "Slave Trade" was initiated and organized by Britain, and the development and "prosperity" of one of England's chief ports, Liverpool, on the Mersey resulted.

IT WAS DIRECTLY CONNECTED WITH THE "PRIMARY ACCUMULATION OF CAPITAL", and the beginning of colonial expansion. This trading in HUMAN FLESH accompanied the rise to power of King "Capital".

Britain was the chief beneficiary of the nefarious kidnapping of African natives. Captain (later Sir) John Hawkins, with his ship (by a strange irony called "Jesus") became the founder of the organized slave trade.

However, Britain had to share its profits with the Bourbon cotton planters of the U.S. southern states.

"It was the price of human flesh and blood that gave us a start". (W. Hunton, Decision in Africa, New York, 1957).

Background of the "Race" Concept - (continued)

Here was created a rather knotty problem for the pious Christian bourgeois moralist. How now to solve his "conscience" - elastic though it might be?

The pseudo-scientists, as usual, provided the answer to the puzzle. The "black" people were different - they were a completely separate "RACE". They were not only different and separate but INFERIOR, so much so that it was a gift of God that they might be reduced to the level of other work animals, bought and sold even as horses or mules. And the holy clerks of holy church quoted scripture in defense of chattel slavery.

The British Government thus came to the collection of taxes on these newly imported slaves of the New World. And this tax collection laid the basis for those deeds that occurred in the later need for the justification of slavery.

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The "Race" concept, deliberately created and adopted by the capitalist class, seeking the maintenance and defense of its privileges, was the justification for the necessary exploitation of native populations.

Later they further developed the "race" concept to justify social discrimination against all other peoples of brown, red or yellow skins. The more the trend developed the more the myth of "race", with its charge of inferiority, increased, until it reached hatred of any with skins other than white. This became the accepted concept of white society. This theory, which holds to the existence of races, is a complete denial of the fact that mankind is a single biological entity.

In this day and age, when science and technology have developed to an almost fantastic degree, the absurd theory of the 18th century capitalism, (in the context of the material conditions of the time) "created" the African black as a chattel, and an inferior, a "soul-less" creature to be bought and sold.

The hysteria now gripping England springs from this reactionary theory of "race" (superior and inferior) and thus is cultivated a hatred of these "inferior races".

Enoch Powell, a reactionary champion of British capitalism and a leading member of the Conservative Party, was expelled from that party's high command for the use of "...intemperate language over issues of policy on race and color" (Christian Science Monitor 4-29-68).

Many British capitalist spokesmen were appalled by the crudeness of Powell's language only - they agree in principle.

"Writing in the Daily Mail Bernard Levin said the speech had a 'peculiar vileness' since it was made by an educated man who has 'gone whoring after ignorance and prejudice'. The London Times called it a wicked speech" (Los Angeles Times, 5-5-68).

Powell's career has been highly colored by his preaching of "race" hatred, proclaiming the formula of "divide and rule", yet he became a hero to thousands of London dockers and meat cutters who have marched on Parliament waving placards like 'not Black Britain'".

Background of the "Race" Concept (concluded)

These recent events in Britain show how much the cultivation of "race hatred" has infected a substantial section of the workers.

Brain-washed and blinded, they have been whipped into a frenzy by use of the myth of "race" inferiority and the degrading of fellow human whose skins differ in color.

Evidence shows once again that "race" is capitalism's creature, helping to perpetuate division among the workers.

The threat of unemployment hanging over Britain's workers fore-shadowed by the Labor Government's proposed austerity that capitalism might be buttressed and preserved is indeed real to Britain's workers at this time. Economic insecurity is feared by a large section. They fail to understand that competition among workers, as among the merchants and manufacturers, is a definite feature of modern capitalism. This condition is maintained only through the tacit consent of the workers themselves.

:Geo. Jenkins

Victoria

POLITICS IN THE SCHOOLS

The theory is that the "public" pays for most modern education by way of taxes through the government and that interruptions of the training process caused by student radicals is preventing the purchasers from getting their full money's worth.

There is a conflict of interests here, generated mostly by the conflicting nature of modern, divided society of which educational institutions are a part. Some of this conflict is generated by popular misconceptions about this social structure. To begin with, a comparison between what politics is and is not, is paramount.

Three basic types of political action have characterized the social scene. To better understand what is, we must delve into what was. Anthropological findings indicate that the first and most longeuous type was social politics, found in most primitive commities, where private property in the means of production has not yet evolved. Therefore social divisions and the consequent conflicts of interests between owners and non-owners of property have not developed. Individual self-interest is expressed to the maximum through identity with all other individuals who have the same objective. This variety of politics is simply "the conduct of the affairs of society."

In the social evolution of man, knowledge and productivity increased a little. Not enough to continue democracy on a larger scale, yet too much for tribal organization to encompass. So a social division was forced on the scene, a division of which the latest form persists to this day. And politics metamorphosed into a class form. The politics of ancient Rome and Greece, were the politics of the owners of slaves. That of Mediaval times was of the landed aristocracy. Today class politics represents the vital interests of the private owners of the peculiar form that the productive apparatus assumes currently-- e.g. capital.

Politics in the Schools (continued)

The alleged immutability of the idea of production for sale-profit accepted with the same matter-of-fact finality as death and taxes, even though all these phenomena (with the exception of death) are relative newcomers to the social arena.

Naturally the interest of such a politically pervading minority is going to be as impregnated in educational institutions as it is in all other segments of this very commercial system.

As Marx remarked in his analysis of that particular commodity that the majority of people must sell to enable them to carry on; "In order to modify the human organism, so that it may acquire skill and handiness in a given branch of industry, and become labor-power of a special kind, a special education or training is requisite....." (Chapter 6, Vol. 1, Capital).

In addition to training for a peculiar kind of productive activity, a continuation of the life-time mental conditioning that keeps the potential worker convinced that profit production is inevitable, is included in the educational process. Educated vegetables, as so many school critics have called them, are needed to produce surplus values for the owning class----to produce capital. People who want to grow, to ask questions, who desire more out of life are undesirables and are discouraged.

The raising of the national flag, the singing of that anthem to the national political power before the school day begins, as is or was the practise in schools along with authority over what, when and how to learn, are all part of the heavy political hand of this minority in society which monopolizes and controls the means of life. They pay most of the taxes that finance schools and universities, and as the old saying goes, "He who pays the piper calls the tune."

The myth that the interests of this class are identical with the well-being of society is carefully cultivated and perpetuated by thousands of highly-paid experts in mental persuasion, and at considerable cost to the owning class. But it pays. With the aid of their modern technology, they take more from society's efforts than they ever did before.

This myth of social classlessness also accounts for the myth that educational facilities serve "the public." Naturally this proposition is supported by all the party, or sub division politicians who are enmeshed in the ideologies of capitalism---the Liberal, Progressive Conservative, Socred and "Communist" parties and their various splinters.

The crunch that ensues from the clash between myth and reality accounts for most of the student unrest. Continued misunderstanding of the nature of society, and therefore the real purpose and function of modern education prolongs the student "revolt."

With the majority of people still committed to the myth, it is not surprising that when idealistic student radicals disrupt the "educational" progress momentarily, a hue and cry goes up. But when Governor-general Michener visits the area, and declares a one-day holiday in deference to the bosses of the land, very little objection is heard.

Politics in the Schools (concluded)

If one is able to miss none of the pertinent evidence on the question, the conclusion is that politics has always been and always will be in educational institutions. To get the kind that entertains the social interest only, which means the individual interests of all who make up society, then idealism will have to be combined with a knowledge of the social system that is the barrier. This usually leads to political action for a fundamental change in the social arrangement---to common ownership and democratic control of the means for producing and distributing wealth, by and in the interests of all society.

Larry Tickner

Victoria

W H A T D O T H E B O S S E S T E L L U S ?

Sometimes Socialists are chided when they analyze reforms and worker benefits as actually being of more benefit to the capitalist than the workers. As the working class presently seem more disposed to listen to their employers than their friends, perhaps it would be illuminating for them to hear a capitalist tell them the way it really is.

Some Capitalists don't realize "what serpents they harbor in their breasts" for one of them has delivered to FULCRUM The B.C. Forest Products Ltd. 1968 Annual Report. The report was no doubt prepared by workers, but it nevertheless represents capitalism's interest.

As might be expected most of the report is concerned with sales and market expansion. But the workers can find out just how lucky they are on page 13. Here the report reveals how it co-operates with the Union and Government on Job Training Program, Management Training and Accident Control Programs. The company in true Big Brother style goes even into the private life of its employees by fostering "a sense of community...through intra-divisional activities involving recreational and social functions...".

And why does B.C.F.P. do all these things? Are they concerned about human fulfillment? Let them tell you why they have this "planned personnel development." "B.C. Forest Product Ltd. is a corporate community of over 4,000 employees...who have shown interest, enthusiasm and dedication, resulting in little turnover and providing a group of skilled and experienced employees," "Performance by our people at all levels has been a most successful factor in the successful growth of the Company," and in case anyone missed the point let this capitalist report re-emphasizes it: "We believe our people are our most valuable asset." "With opportunity to participate, develop and advance, we are confident our employees will continue to make a significant contribution to the Company's steady growth."

As critical as this writing is, it would be a mistake to consider it as an attempt to make a whipping boy of the B.C. Forest Products. Nor should the B.C.F.P. executive look here to find a way to improve the Employer-employee relationship. They are probably doing the best they can within the production-for-sale relationship. The problem does not arise because of a lack of human idealism nor can it be solved by increased doles of said human idealism. If it could have been solved it would have already been done--a hundred times over. The problem is not caused by "bad" or "greedy" or "monopoly" capitalists. Therefore it will not be solved by "good" or "altruistic" or state capitalists.

What do the Bosses Tell Us? (concluded)

The kernel of the problem is that the products involved take the form of commodities. That is, they are produced for sale for the profit of those shareholders who in reality own the company. That is the problem--not good guys vs bad guys, but a circumstance, an economic relationship of how and for what things are produced and if that is the barrier to human fulfillment, then that is the barrier that must be removed. To remove it the workers of the B.C.F.P. and their fellow workers elsewhere who know damn well why the wheels turn, will have to do more than merely get annoyed about company sop which tells them about "your" company.

They must organize politically to take all the productive and distributive forces away from all the shareholders and bondholders and then in a world of non ownership or common ownership all the productive forces can be marshaled to satisfy the needs of all mankind. In such an environment there will be no incentive or need for anyone to do as the B.C.F.P. executive does today--to artificially "foster a sense of community" in any field of human endeavor. The way the productive forces will be owned and the motivation for its operation will make such a sense of community arise naturally.

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